Ish 41: The day the circus came to town

Studs Up

July
1999
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The Australian Fans' Perspective

Fans duped again - but who else fell for it?

Also in this issue:

The International Soccer Expo
What REALLY happened (and didn't happen!)

Get your writs out for the lads!
Cole/Colosimo clash causes Carlton consternation

Serious reform imminent in Victoria
Seriously, this is no laughing matter

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Disclaimer (of sorts):

Studs Up is a fanzine and should therefore be digested accordingly.
The opinions expressed between and including the front and back covers have been developed through years of being immersed in the highs and lows of the world game, so please refrain from being offended should one of the contributors occasionally let his/her emotions get the better of them.
Besides, we have a right to be grumpy. We've never seen our national team play at the World Cup Finals.

The die-hards who contributed to this issue:
Kevin Christopher, Harry Georgiadis, Michael Cronin (photos), Steve Pitman, David Arnold, Ewen Anderson, Dwyght Tuffnell, FIFA, Wolfman, Green Rover, the legendary Andre Kruger, Paul Gearing, Kasey Puyenbroek, and the saviour Geoff Coy

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Which 'roos?

If it wasn't so serious it would be funny. For years a country cries foul when opposition touring teams dropped in for a quick visit in the off-season, commanding large sums of money then arriving with little more than a reserve team and entertaining the crowd accordingly. So it was with fairly bated breath when it announced that the reigning European champions (and greatest team ever this side of Jupiter blah blah) Manchester United were coming for a two match tour of Oz to be followed by a two match trip to China.

As soon as the tour was announced there were plenty of home-based sceptics yet thousands of ex-pat Poms happily shovelled money at Rene Rivkin and once the 'Holy Treble' had been achieved, the PR machine went into overdrive.

Yes! Beckham will be coming. Er, maybe he won't. *Yes!* Harry Kewell will be coming. Er, maybe he won't. *Yes!* Mark Viduka will still be here. Er, see ya Mark.

So the sceptics were right. Or did they have justifiable reasons for staying away?

It was no great secret back around the time of the Expo that most of the Euroroos would be unavailable – that is, not released by their clubs for what they (not unexpectedly) viewed as Man Utd's pre-season preparations. As late as a week before Game 1, players such as Tony Vidmar and Zeljko Kalac were still pulling out, leaving an exasperated Bunco looking as if the media deserved an explanation.

"The players want to come ... but the clubs are holding them back,"

As expected his pleas fell on deaf ears and he finally had to announce a squad brimming with, um, inexperience.

For most of the younger players, it was a sniff of Disneyland. For most of the older fans it carried the stench of just another rip-off.

Which coach?

By the time you read this the identity of the new Australian national coach should have been made public. All the smart money appears to have been laid on Frank Farina and with the three major candidates (Mitchell, Kmoevic and Farina) all having similar playing experience in Europe there seems little doubt that all three would have the respect of the current overseas-based players.

No disrespect to Ange Postecoglou, but European experience is the cornerstone of respect when it comes to the majority of our young players. Ange trails the other three candidates in that regard, although if he can lead South Melbourne to the World Club Championship (no, they haven't actually qualified for it yet despite what some journalists would lead you to believe) then his name may well carry greater weight next time.

Although it may not be entirely relevant, the fact that Mitchell has taken half of Sydney United's squad to Parramatta Power must weigh on the minds of the selectors, and stability for Sydney's newest NSL club will be seen as a matter of some importance. Which leaves us with Farina and Kmoevic.

Eddie for Marconi? Watch this space.

Get your writs out for the lads

By Harry Georgiadis

It should have been one of the highlights of Simon Colosimo's brief, but promising career. A chance to pit his skills against Manchester United on their recent tour. Exhibition matches only perhaps, but for a player destined to play in Europe, an opportunity to showcase his talents against the European champions.

Less than half-an-hour into the Socceroos second match against United at Stadium Australia, Colosimo and Andy Cole both ran for the same ball from opposite directions. Cole lunged at it but, with the ball not bouncing as high as expected, was beaten by Colosimo. Instead of getting to the ball, Cole's tackle caught Colosimo on the side of the knee, tearing his anterior and cruciate ligaments.

The challenge left Colosimo lying on a heap on the turf and sent shudders of concern throughout Stadium Australia and, in particular Raul Blanco and Lou Sticca. Colosimo may not recover in time for the Sydney Olympics but, apart from Colosimo himself of course, Carlton looks like being the biggest loser during the player's long lay-off. Carlton's financial well being was so dependent on the youngster and, more to the point, on Carlton's ability to sell him to a European club after the Olympics.

The controversy created greater media attention in Australia than it did in England, where it has generally been shrugged off as one of those things. An incensed Carlton General Manager Lou Sticca pointed out that "*The question I would like to put is if the shoe was on the other foot, either Andy Cole or David Beckham [had been injured] .....what do you think the uproar would be in England*". The referees were intimidated by Man U and were loathe to punish any of their tackles. Danny Tiatto, no doubt, would have been sent off for committing a similar tackle on Yorke or Stam.

Carlton has appointed a law firm to explore possible legal action on behalf of Colosimo, whose contract expires next year. But who exactly is liable? Cole ?(who once had both legs broken in a reserve match at Anfield), Manchester United?, Soccer Australia?, Rivlon Entertainment? Is Cole negligent for a tackle that wasn't too violent but certainly deserved a red card? Is legal action limited only to players who have had their careers ended by injury?

Several precedents in England provide an indication of the possible success of any legal action. In 1987, Sheffield Wednesday's England Under 21 defender Ian Knight had his leg broken in seven places in a tackle with Chester City's Gary Bennett. After several unsuccessful comeback attempts, Knight retired and launched legal action. The most high profile recent actions were taken by Chelsea's Paul Elliott (against Dean Saunders in 1991), Ian Durrant and Torquay's John Uzzell who had his cheekbone fractured in a challenge with Brentford's Gary Blissett.

Two recent examples, however, provide an indication of football's future. While most of the early cases were settled out of court, the judiciary awarded its first damages nearly two years ago. In December 1997, Stockport's Brian McCord was awarded 500,000 pounds after taking legal action against Swansea's John Cornforth. Darren Pitcher is currently taking legal action after his career was ended in a challenge with ex-Huddersfield player Paul Reid.

Pitcher, unlike the above instances, is taking action against Huddersfield rather than Reid, an interesting development that, if successful, would make clubs legally liable for the actions of their players. Perhaps it could even lead to coaches encouraging their players not to violently assault the opposition for fear of litigation.

The success of any legal action would rest on whether Andy Cole acted negligently, recklessly, outside the normal bounds of conduct or failed to exercise a duty of care towards Simon Colosimo. It would need to be proved that Cole's tackle wasn't mistimed or intentional but reckless and it was that recklessness that caused Colosimo's injury.

Successful legal action on behalf of Colosimo has the potential to totally change the face of sport in this country and, probably, beyond. Previous legal action in soccer has usually come about as a result of violent action that caused a career-ending injury. The Cole-Colosimo challenge was neither violent, malicious nor career ending. Successful legal action could have the result of, potentially, making every mistimed tackle a litigious one, opening up the game to endless legal action and forcing soccer authorities to legislate tackling out of the game.

If you think modern football is soft, then just imagine what it could be turned into after the courts have their way.

Ultimately, the courts may have to decide on whether Cole's tackle was mistimed or reckless and didn't exercise a duty of care. It is a timely reminder of the legal ramifications of sport and highlights the responsibility of soccer authorities and referees in clamping down on violent and dangerous play. If soccer authorities don't clamp down on violent play, the courts will do it for them. Possible litigation isn't only confined to bad tackles. Many of the pitches and conditions across the country are sub-standard. Clubs and federations should be aware of their responsibility to provide a safe playing environment. Who is liable if a player's career is ended by an injury caused by a sub-standard playing surface?

Several years ago, an AFL player suffered a terrible injury at Waverley Park on a pitch that had just been re-laid. The league immediately transferred matches scheduled at the venue until it could be improved. Further down soccer's scale the problems are more acute.

Thousands of matches are played at amateur level on poor community pitches and often without official referees. Thankfully, Australia doesn't have the lawsuit culture of the United States (yet) but Simon Colosimo's injury is a reminder that players have a duty of care towards each other. Authorities must provide a safe environment for all players by encouraging decent refereeing, good pitches and adequate medical attention. So the next time your coach tells you to get your retaliation in first or you feel like putting that fancy winger into row 'Z', think again. A red card could be the least of your worries.

South Melbourne – Not in Brazil yet, but...

A couple of publications have got ahead of themselves a little bit by making predictions about South Melbourne's progress at the World Club Championship next January, but of course there is the small matter of qualifying for them first.

The Oceania Club Championship kicks off on September 18 and we have to assume that South Melbourne will top their group and qualify for the final on September 25.

Don't expect too much media coverage of the event however – the final just happens to clash with the AFL Grand Final. The lack of media interest shouldn't worry the bean counters at Bob Jane (whoops, there we go, getting ahead of ourselves again) however, with the losing teams at the WCC collecting a participation cheque of around $750,000, and that's US bucks, folks. Which may mean that South Melbourne could be involved in some torrid transfer activity as the season gets underway.

The Kiwis haven't yet worked out which team will be representing them in Fiji but we should be able to bring you a full dossier in SU42. In the meantime, here is the groupings for Fiji.

Check '*Look Out For*' for the full draw.

The Oceania Club Championship – The Groups

Grp A Sth Melb (Aust), Konica (American Samoa), AS Venus (Tahiti), Tafea (Vanuatu).

Grp B Nadi (Fiji), Malaita Eagles (Solomon Islands), Kiwi (Samoa), New Zealand rep.

IMPORTANT FIXTURES OR MEANINGLESS FRIENDLIES?

Stevo wonders if the last couple of months have been worth all the bother

There has been much debate of late in local circles concerning the series of friendly matches undertaken by the Socceroos in recent months. Many journalists and supporters of the game have touted both the positive and negative aspect of the games versus the World Stars and Manchester United.

Let's consider the first encounter. I actually attended this game with a group of friends and my ticket cost $129. Add to this the cost of our inner-city accommodation and you're looking at a substantial sum of money for a friendly international.

I don't think any of us believed the hype about which international stars would be coming to the game. I think we always suspected that many of these luminaries, having just completed a long and strenuous season, would baulk at the idea of taking the long flight down under to play more football. Let's look at the side who turned out with both eyes open. Of the players on show, I reckon only Campos, Vieri, Leonardo and Klinsmann could truly claim the title of World Class – and the latter is actually retired from the game.

Having said that, and allowing for the possibility that the World XI deliberately laid down and died in the second half to let the Socceroos have their moment of glory, there were nevertheless many positives to come out of this game. It gave us the opportunity to witness the "official" (ha ha!) opening of the fabulous Olympic Stadium, and a rare chance to get inside the ground. We were also able to attend the moderately successful soccer expo. Most importantly, we were allowed a rare glimpse of a full strength Socceroo outfit. Moreover they played quite well, albeit against a largely disinterested opposition.

Moving on to the second friendly series against Man Utd Plc. I write this on the eve of the second match, and I hope to Hell it's a better television spectacle than the first encounter. Others may talk the Melbourne game up, but for me it was a poor example of our game to present the rest of the country on commercial television.

Yes, it was good to see a near full strength Man Utd go through the motions, but in complete contrast to the World XI game, the Socceroo side was perhaps our third choice eleven and a bit of an insult to those who forked out a small fortune to see it. Noone can really blame our overseas pros, who refused to jeopardise their club positions for a rather meaningless friendly against a club side, albeit one of the best club sides in the world.

As a television spectacle it was rather dull fare indeed, a factor borne out by the five people in the room watching it with me. They were all life long football fans and players and in all honesty we spent most of the match talking about more interesting things. In fact, we got a bigger kick out of the program that followed, "When Animals Attack IV", or as I like to call it, "When Animals Go the Bite". It makes me really proud of my species that there are three more of these programs out there, and nothing gives me more cultural satisfaction than watching a young woman have her leg removed by a great white shark live on film.

But I digress. The issue at stake once again is our eternal problem of the tyranny of distance. It seems to be a sad fact of life that we will rarely have our main players on show while they are making a living on the other side of the world. To expect them to return for meaningless friendly games like these with nothing at stake is futile. More importantly, these games are probably unlikely to attract new supporters to the game because they totally lack passion. Hence, I reiterate they are a poor television spectacle.

Had the final World Cup qualifier v Iran coincided with the opening of the Homebush Stadium, I have no doubt it would have been a near sellout, 110,000 spectators watching a significant, fully charged game between two teams with something to aim for.

So as a supporter I beg of Soccer Australia, I know it's not easy but please give us something meaningful for our money. Either that or stop making false promises and overcharging. I know there are political ramifications, but getting the Asians to let us in to the Asian Nations Cup would be a significant step forward. Australia versus Japan, China, Iran, Saudi Arabia or the UAE in a meaningful competition, I'd pay to see that. Additionally, the South Americans are now inviting nations from other Confederations into the Copa America (such as Japan this year). Get us into that competition. That is the way forward for us on the international stage.

Finally, having said all that I will still be coughing out a small fortune to see the Socceroos play Brazil later this year. Even if neither team has their full side out, at least I know I'll be seeing the nucleus of the Brazilian World Cup squad for 2006. Remember the Bicentennial Tournament in 1988 and a relatively unknown fellah called Romario?

Copa America, Confederations Cup – Yes, they WERE relevant

Despite the weakened squads, fixture balls-ups, venue arguments and assorted soap operas (Ronaldo's latest injury concern, Mexican drug test failures etc) there was something for Australia to digest from the 1999 Copa America. Yes, it is just over two years until we (hopefully) play-off against the fifth best CONMEBOL nation but there are definite signs as to where Oz should be sending the spies.

Naturally, Brazil showed they will finish in the top four, having proved they know how to shut down a match, and one suspects Argentina should as well once they start using a full strength squad. The performance of Uruguay was astounding and showed the inadequacies of a tournament that allows a team to make the final despite just winning one of five matches. But the Uruguayans showed they have strength in depth, a vital commodity in South America when it comes to player availability. Colombia also continue to impress, but can be erratic so they must be grouped with Paraguay, Bolivia and Chile as the other possible opponents.

The timing of the 2001 Copa America may prove interesting, with a number of nations once again probably opting for weakened squads in an effort to keep their stars fresh for the more important World Cup qualifying matches. In the meantime, we're going to have to keep track of a lot of nations.

As the Confederations Cup proved. While most of the Oz media tended to ignore the Mexican event the Kiwis were busy getting the sort of match practice Australia thought we had a divine right to. We'll never know whether we would have done any better than the Kiwis, but the experience gained by our Tasman neighbours over the past month will stand them in great stead when they tackle us further on down the track.

It is somewhat amazing that Rivkin - a local promoter - threatened to break up Beckham's honeymoon and force Fergie to miss his investiture, says David Arnold as he pleads

GIVE ME THE **HARD**-NOSED BUSINESSMAN

The recent exhibition games against a FIFA 55th XI and Manchester United should have been a golden moment or two for the fan as well as guaranteeing a nice little earner for the governing body.

Not exactly the case. The Promoters involved, Left Field for the FIFA game and Rivkin for the Treble-winners, must gloat at their luck in gaining the services of the Socceroos for peanuts. You can only wonder if the Socceroos came more cheaply than a Federal backbencher.
The amount paid out by the Promoters to SA was negligible. SA received a set fee, but then had to pay for the player's wages out of that, which might explain why SA is still in financial trouble (and for many, deserve to be in financial trouble). It would appear that negotiating for a take of the gate is beyond SA (Soccer Amateurs perhaps?)

This, despite the financial excesses of the Hill era, is unacceptable. 2 new clubs have joined the league, and with Carlton's change of ownership, SA should have realised $750,000 from those 3 clubs alone. It would be interesting to read the reaction of the GM's and owners of those 3 clubs, having to fork out $250,000 each only to watch their money going towards shoring up the Sydney Unileds of the league.

Taking a leaf out of AFL or even League, they did not get to their respective peaks by sucking hind tit to every club in financial trouble. They told, demanded and then forced the clubs to accept the best possible deal for the game and not their own selfish interests.
These people were not softies. They were hard-nosed businessmen with the bottom line and success in their visions. I envy AFL and League for reaching their exalted status and dream of the NSL matching them, but it won't happen with the current administration.

I have grave concerns the current administration is all we deserve. Surely we learnt the lesson on the 29th? Never look the gift horse in the mouth.

Final Score? Private Promoters 10M+ Soccer Amateurs $250,000. It is somewhat amazing that Rivkin - a local promoter - threatened to break up Beckham's honeymoon and force Fergie to miss his investiture. IMG, meanwhile, probably overdid the strawberries and cream at Wimbledon. Despite their massive status and influence in world sport, they were unable to secure the release of even one player.

Guess which one SA picked as their agents!

"Oi, Teddy! Who's that bearded geezer making all the noise then, eh?"

Get the book out!

Yellow card to NSW Soccer for programming all 2nd Division games at 10 am on the morning of the Man U game at Stadium Australia on 18th July. The decision to play them at this ungodly hour (well, it was Sunday) was reached only a few weeks before the big day, despite the dates being known months earlier. To compound matters one of the games was a potential title decider. It would have meant weary part time players traipsing out to or from the outer suburbs, after a night on the tiles, or at least getting out of a warm Sunday morning bed to fulfil strategic engagements. Any hopes of enticing spectators as well - forget it!
As things turned out, it was too wet to play more than one of the matches and they all had to be rescheduled anyway. Which brings us to..

Red card to NSW Soccer for re-programming the 5 outstanding 2nd Division games at 3 pm on Sunday 1st August in direct competition with the NSW Super League Grand Final at Marconi Stadium at the same time. Players, referees and supporters were livid.
And the title decider? The Maltese backed Hajduk Wanderers (forget the Croatian name, the checkered army bring no supporters to these games) all support Parramatta Eagles who were playing...in the SS Grand Final at Marconi 2 kilometres away. CLE-VER!
And also a number of other catch-up games in other divisions were re-arranged for that Sunday too. Give me strength!

And finally a **Yellow card** to SU for another of those 'production errors' we are occasionally prone to. . No, we're not going to run a competition asking readers to guess the missing 'Roos. We'll just humbly apologise to Max Tolson and Garry Manuel and go and take an early shower. And to make up for what happened last month, we've added some extra information in the meantime.

1 REILLY Jack	Melbourne Hakoah	27-Aug-1945
2 UTJESENOVIC Doug	St. George-Budapest	08-Oct-1946
3 WILSON Peter	Safeway United	15-Sep-1947
4 SCHAEFER Manfred	St. George-Budapest	12-Feb-1943
5 CURRAN Colin	Western Suburbs	24-Aug-1947
6 RICHARDS Bay	Marconi-Fairfield	18-May-1944
7 ROONEY James	Apia-Leichhardt	10-Dec-1945
8 MACKAY Jimmy	Hakoah Eastern Suburbs	19-Dec-1943
9 WARREN John	St. George-Budapest	17-May-1943
10 MANUEL Garry	Pan Hellenic	20-Feb-1950
11 ABONYI Attila	St. George-Budapest	18-Aug-1946
12 ALSTON Adrian	Safeway United	08-Feb-1948
13 OLLERTON Peter	Apia Leichhardt	20-May-1951
14 TOLSON Maxwell	Safeway United	18-Jul-1945
15 WILLIAM Harry	St. George Budapest	07-May-1951
16 RUDIC Ivo	Pan Hellenic	25-Jan-1942
17 HARDING David	Pan Hellenic	14-Aug-1946
18 WATKISS John	Hakoah Eastern Suburbs	28-Mar-1941
19 CAMPBELL Ernie	Marconi-Farfield	20-Oct-1941
20 BULJEVIC Branko	J.U.S.T.	06-Sep-1947
21 MILISAVLJAVIC Jimmy	J.U.S.T.	15-Apr-1951
22 MAHER Allan	Sutherland Shire	21-Jul-1950

More grounds for concern

Harry Georgiadis looks at the benefits of ground-sharing in Melbourne

In an attempt to rid itself of any association with the Aussie Rules club, Carlton Soccer Club moved from Optus Oval in March. New owners, new coach, new stadium, new beginning. Or so it seemed.

Olympic Park saw Carlton attract even smaller crowds than it did at Optus Oval. Despite the small gates, Carlton is determined to play at Olympic Park next season.

A short drive away lies Bob Jane Stadium, a compact venue adequate for South Melbourne's current requirements but, due to the clubs lack of resources, is unlikely to be developed into a venue fit for Ericsson Cup soccer in the 21st Century. The stadium was only used 14 times by South Melbourne and for several Premier League finals matches in 1998/99.

The government is understandably unwilling to further develop a venue that is used so infrequently. A committee of management, on the other hand, runs Olympic Park, and the cost of playing there is extremely high. Parking at Bob Jane can be a problem but the situation is far worse at Olympic Park. Its army of support staff (there are at least 10 turnstiles) make it one of the most expensive grounds to rent. During one of Carlton's home games, there seemed to be more staff than fans.

No wonder then that admission prices at Olympic Park are some of the highest in the league. Seating (and by seating we mean plastic seats bolted onto old terracing, giving fans a poor view) cost $45 at both the 1998 and 1999 Grand Finals and in 1998 there were no concession tickets available for kids and pensioners forcing them to pay full admission.

Carlton was allowed to use Olympic Park for free last season but an average crowd far in excess of their average is required in 1999/2000 for the club to break even.

No doubt the costs of playing at Olympic Park will be passed on to fans in the form of more expensive season tickets.

Premier Jeff Kennett once opined that it would be ideal for both clubs to share Bob Jane but unfortunately a combination of stubbornness and pride (on both sides) is likely to ensure the idea is stillborn. Since Carlton's inception, the relationship between Victoria's biggest clubs has been uneasy.

There is a barely disguised contempt between the clubs, particularly at board level. South believes Carlton has shown little regard for its achievements and tradition, seeing the club as a corporate creation trying to unseat it as Melbourne's most well attended club.

Carlton views South Melbourne as an ethnically backed club that has had its chance to gain mainstream support and blown it. Billy Damianos' aborted move to Carlton in 1997 was only the most public spat. Some fans have suggested South and Carlton sharing Bob Jane would be like Spurs playing at Highbury or Manchester United playing at Elland Road. Absolute nonsense, the two-year-old Carlton-South rivalry can in no way be compared to Spurs-Arsenal or Leeds-Manchester United. Anyway, Milan and Inter have shared the San Siro for decades and still retained their identity.

There are several issues that would need to be addressed (particularly related to the social club) before Carlton could move in but the benefits to both clubs far outweigh any perceived loss of identity or pride.

Firstly, it would allow clubs to halve their maintenance and running costs whilst maximising gate receipts and keeping admission increases to a minimum. Government funding for developing the stadium into a first class venue for all soccer fans would be easier to attain if BJS were used every week rather than every fortnight. With more money being put into ground developments and less on maintenance, Carlton and South would be able to spend more on attracting star players, investing in youth and promoting the game. A bigger and better BJS, holding 20,000, would cement the ground as Victoria's premier soccer facility, and turn it into a Victorian Hindmarsh where fans can attend an Ericsson Cup match every week.

The clubs could encourage fans by having discounted dual membership tickets and other schemes to encourage more fans to games.

The cost of fielding a side in the NSL (already sizeable) is growing every season. Many clubs devote almost their entire revenue on their playing staff.

If the Soccer 21 masterplan is to be believed this will rise even more rapidly in the next five years, making it vital that Victorian clubs cut unnecessary costs.

Despite dominating on the field (Melbourne clubs have won four of the last five titles and Melbourne has hosted six of the last nine grand finals) its attendances are very poor, particularly when the size of the city and the success of Glory and Spirit is taken into consideration. Some radical thinking is required if Victoria is to preserve its current status, starting with South Melbourne and Carlton sharing the same venue.

Time to start 'Club 81' ?

Possibly, but if you're thinking of starting it you better be quick 'cos in a couple of months you'll have to update it to 'Club 82' anyway. Confused? What? You've never heard of 'The 92 Club' ? Okay, let's backpedal a bit. Once upon a time in England the Football League was a cosy affair where hardly anyone ever got relegated from (the old) Division Four, which meant the size of the league remained stable at 92. And 'train-spotter' type soccer fans used to make it a goal to attend a match at each of the 92 league venues.

Times have changed and we're on a different island but the thought has cropped up that perhaps a certificate of appreciation could be awarded to the person who has actually visited the most venues to hosted one or more NSL matches.

So, what proof would be required? Match ticket? Match Programme? Photograph of yourself in front of the scoreboard? An interstate bus/train ticket? Your Visacard statement for withdrawal of cash at the ATM in Lismore?

Hmm, okay. For now we'll accept a list based on honesty but we reserve the right to fire the odd question at any potential candidates. Next issue we'll publish the full list but to get the ball rolling, Ewen Anderson has submitted an impressive list of sixteen as the early benchmark. Although we may have to clarify number sixteen before awarding Ewen provisional leader status.

1) Perry Park; 2) Suncorp; 3) Richlands; 4) North Sydney Oval; 5) Marconi Stadium; 6) St George Sted. 7) Melita Stadium; 8) Parramatta Stadium; 9) Edensor Park; 10) Leichhardt Oval; 11) Somers St; 12) Falcons Park, Morwell; 13) Connor Res. (Preston); 14) Olympic Village; 15) Hindmarsh and 16) Some Aussie Rules ground in Adelaide whose name I forget right now.

SERIOUS reform imminent in Victoria

Dwyght Tuffnell explains how the latest series of reforms in Victoria will transform metropolitan soccer.

Victorian soccer will undergo a massive facelift at the end of this current season. Not only is the Premier League going to twelve clubs and running alongside the NSL in summer, the lower leagues are also changing. Division One will, for all intents and purposes, remain the same. Below that however, is where things start to get a little complicated.

Division's Two, Three and Four will be scrapped in favour of four divisions made up of teams placed into their regional zones. These two zones are likely to be divided into North-West and South-East, designed to cut down on travel given that the sides below Division One are (supposedly) amateur.

It hasn't always worked though. The North-West of Melbourne always has, and always will be the stronger soccer areas with more clubs than the South-East.

Take the case of Newport United in Provisional League Division Three South-East. Clubs in that division have to travel to Newport, a place that is almost closer to Adelaide than it is to the South-East.

Things are fairly tight at the top of State League Division One. Heidelberg United seem set to make a quick return to the Premier League and could be accompanied by Oakleigh. Both sides would meet all the criteria required by the VSF to gain promotion to the Premier League.

Here's how the make-up of the Premier and State Leagues could look next season, hopefully it makes things a bit clearer, but *please*, bear in mind that this is only how it could look as the leagues were compiled with the standings in the various tables at 18/7/99

Six teams will be relegated from Division One at the end of the season but given that there were eight rounds to go at the time of writing, those teams to drop are far from settled.

The teams dropping down from the Premier League (Westvale and Sunshine are certainties) will join the team who wins Division Two, currently Essendon – who have yet to lose a game and boast a fairly decent side with the likes of Sean Lane and Dale White – along with the second placed team, currently Frankston Pines.

PREMIER LEAGUE 2000

Altona East Phoenix
Altona Magic
Bentleigh Greens
Bulleen Inter Kings
Fawkner Blues
Green Gully Cavaliers
*Heidelberg United
Melbourne Raiders
*Oakleigh
Port Melbourne Sharks
Preston Lions
St Albans Saints

*promoted from Division One

At the end of the 2000 season, the top two will be promoted to the Premier League and the bottom two will be relegated, replaced by the winners of both Division Two zones. The team who finishes in 10th spot (third from the bottom) will take part in a play-off series with the two runners-up of both Division Two zones. Initially, the two runners-up will meet for the right to take on the side who finish 10th in Division One.

The six teams relegated from Division One will join the remaining twelve clubs from Division Two and the teams who finish in the top six of Division Three.
These 24 clubs will be split up into two zones. How these zones will work is not yet known but with the VSF favouring North-West and South-East for Provisional and Women's competitions, it's a fair bet to assume that it will also be the case for the restructured State Leagues.

The Division Three table at 18/7/99 had Stonnington City, South Springvale, South Wantirna, Fitzroy City, North Coburg United and Laverton Park in the top six positions.
Croydon City Arrows and Diamond Valley United, currently occupying the bottom two spots, have played through the season safe in the knowledge that they can't be relegated.
No play-offs here though, two sides from each zone will be relegated at the end of the season.

The eight clubs left in Division Three will be joined by all fourteen teams from Division Four plus the top two from Provisional League Division One (currently Endeavour United and Morwell Pegasus).
These 24 clubs will also be divided into two zones.
The winners and second placed teams from each zone will be promoted at the end of the season.

STATE LEAGUE
DIVISION ONE 2000

Doncaster Rovers
*Essendon
*Frankston Pines
Lalor United
Richmond
#South Dandenong
#Springvale White Eagles
#Sunshine Georgies
Western Suburbs
Westgate
#Westvale
Yarraville Glory

relegated from Premier League
*promoted from Division Two

STATE LEAGUE
DIVISION 2 NORTH-WEST 2000

Altona City
Diamond Valley United
Fitzroy City
Geelong
Laverton Park
*Melbourne City
North Coburg United
*Northcote City
*North Geelong
Satellite City Rovers
Thomastown/Regent
*Werribee City

STATE LEAGUE
DIVISION 2 SOUTH-EAST 2000

Cranbourne Comets
Croydon City Arrows
East Richmond
Frankston Strikers
*Kingston City
Knox City
Old Scotch Waverley
Ringwood City
South Springvale
South Wantirna
*Springvale City
Stonnington City

* relegated from Division One

Masochists or just plain naïve?

Steve has little doubt which term applies to Australian soccer supporters

Have you ever wondered what it is that makes you a follower of Australian soccer - what keeps you going? I have. And after mulling it over, on and off, for more years than I care to remember I am convinced I've finally arrived at the simple, indisputable truth about us all.

The truth is that we are nothing but a bunch of closet masochists. Come on - admit it. We must be. We actually enjoy pain, anguish and scorn. Isn't it true that every time we think we've seen it all and experienced every low there is to experience in following the sport, and when we face the prospect that our agony will be curtailed by good times for Aussie soccer, we find that Aussie soccer reserves the right to once more deliver hair-tearing frustration? Then we gladly come back for more. That, to me, defines masochism.

Consider the latest big event to cater to our need for regular anguish - the unabashed and emphatically fabulous farce that became the Socceroos' contribution to the Socceroos v Manchester United series. Now, I must admit that when this series was confirmed things looked alarmingly good. It was truly the stuff of an optimist's dreams - one of the most successful club teams ever, certainly the most famous, playing against the best players Australia has ever been able to muster. All in full stadia before a commercial TV audience and a horde of journalists from mass circulation newspapers.

This disturbingly promising scenario was made all the more probable because, once the dates were decided, there appeared to be no hope of stopping it from happening. United were contracted to bring their best players and our overseas-based Socceroos would have nothing better to do than turn up. How were we self-respecting Aussie soccer fans to preserve our tortured souls, our pariah status in the workplace, our treasured underdog mentality and the sheer, unbridled pleasure in misery that these things have brought us for so long, when national fame and adulation beckoned Aussie soccer? Things looked so rosy that we might have wondered what we would do to ever again enjoy some good, old-fashioned pain after the series. It could be back to boring self-flagellation and watching endless re-runs of our Australia v Iran videotapes, complete with Johnny Warren weeping.

As the weeks went on, though, and the United tour approached, we began to realise that any thoughts that our satisfied agony would be alleviated were baseless. I, for one, saw that I had based my thinking upon a completely spurious assumption. Look closely at the paragraph above and that spurious assumption should now be readily apparent, although only a few weeks ago I couldn't see it at all. Yes, there it is - "the overseas-based Socceroos would have nothing better to do than turn up". Silly me!

Over recent years, as the sporadic departure of Aussie players to overseas clubs turned into an exodus, most of us were influenced by voices of reason which said that it was necessary and good for Australian soccer that those players complete their footballing educations in foreign finishing schools. I must admit that I listened with a strange knot in my stomach as I was told that those players would give us a stronger national team, even qualify us for the World Cup.

Gradually, however, my comfortably familiar sense of malaise returned as it became apparent that overseas clubs would not release our players for national team duty if it clashed with key dates on the clubs' domestic calendars. Sure, there were some Aussies who defied their clubs and turned up for national duty anyway, but these green-and-gold-hearted types soon became the exception rather than the rule. The ensuing revolving-door selection policy resulted in Socceroo performances being mostly disjointed and underachieving, and enabled the media to continue ridiculing or ignoring our game. It was all very reassuring.

But the Man United series threatened to be different. Since it would be played in the European off-season our overseas players would not be needed for club games. Hell, some of them would already be in Oz for the FIFA All Stars exhibition game and a holiday!

Pronouncements by some of our players before the All Stars game also gave cause for concern. Ned Zelic spoke of his desire to captain the Socceroos, Harry Kewell told us how much it meant to him to turn out for the Socceroos for the games "that mattered", and others spoke of how they saw the All Stars game as the Socceroos' first step on the road to the next World Cup. There was more than a hint of a great team spirit developing. Here, in essence, was a disaster in the making for Aussie soccer followers.

However, as I intimated earlier, Aussie soccer retains a magnificent capacity to salvage ignominy whenever mass acclamation and respect beckon. Salvation on this occasion came from a source we had not foreseen - a source that carried the previously innocuous label of "pre-season training". How were we to have known that European clubs would declare that pre-season training for them was more important and more beneficial to their Aussie players than playing for their national team against Europe's best club team? How were we to have known that most of our top Socceroos, only weeks after wearing their green and gold hearts on their sleeves, would agree with their clubs and return to the training paddocks of Europe?

The week or so prior to the United series was pure bliss. First, overseas clubs put the bite on our Socceroos, leaving us confused and bewildered about who to select. Then Soccer Australia said it would write in protest to FIFA, invoking the right to ban those overseas clubs from using our players for club games that coincided with the week of the Socceroos v Man United games. Well, I've got to say that even though I'm sure we find nothing so pleasurable as misery, we all enjoy a good laugh every now and then. Which club games were they, then? The five-a-side training games at Coventry City? Perhaps the Celtic Firsts versus the Celtic Reserves?

The comedy was interrupted when Soccer Australia reconsidered this course of action, but there were more laughs to be had when Ned Zelic was reported as saying that if SocAus had taken this course of action he would have quit the Socceroos for good. Now isn't that what we all want in our future national team captain? The sort of unhesitating commitment to the team, the cause and the nation's fans that, if harnessed successfully, could keep us out of the World Cup and ecstatic in purgatory until at least 2006?

Next came the reaction of Rivkin Entertainment, the bankrollers of the series, to the news that David Beckham and Alex Ferguson would not be turning up with United. Displaying balls that Soccer Australia has never had, RE let it be known that they would dock United $2 million of the $4 million appearance fee they had negotiated with the club if they did not cause Beckham and Fergie to arrive with the side to fulfil its contractual obligations. This was heavy stuff! Here was a club with a rumoured annual turnover of $180 million, and which is valued in the billions, being threatened with earning only $2 million for two exhibition matches instead of $4 million!

It could only have been funnier if RE had applied the same approach to Soccer Australia which, of course, was not exactly making a good fist of ensuring that its strongest squad turned up for the games. But why give us too much of a good thing? The abject confusion that our team and our poor, apparently unrespected, seat-warming coach Raul Blanco were in, was pleasure enough for us fans. By the time the Socceroos squad was named, only Lazaridis, Foxe, Grella and Aurelio Vidmar remained of the squadron of overseas-based players who had been in the squad for the All Stars game.

Given this sort of build-up, I'm sure we hardened masochists were all feeling a warm inner glow. Our furtive pleasures were safe for now. In fact, perhaps we had never had it so good, for we could reflect upon the fact that the reputation of the transient entity known as the Socceroos had plumbed new depths.

Australia's failure to assert itself and have its national team duly recognised as more important than the pre-season training of European clubs, and the apparent unwillingness of our best players to show the clubs, and us, that playing regularly for Australia actually matters to them, meant that only a month after the All Stars game a stunning trifecta had been achieved. Our A-list players had once again exposed the reputation of our national team to ridicule at home and abroad, shoved a "WRONG WAY - GO BACK" sign in the faces of any promoters or sponsors with the remotest interest in backing the Socceroos, and shown complete disdain for Aussie soccer fans.

What could have been better? The only down side came when our second eleven (the enhanced Olyroos) performed admirably, but we can console ourselves with the thought that in a few years time most of them will probably be overseas and unavailable for national team duty. So while real soccer nations continue picking their best eleven and hoping like hell that they're good enough, we can go on picking our best eleven and hoping like hell that they show up.

I can't wait for the Brazil series!

Ed: Okay then, just for the record, here are the line-ups. And we'd like to extend our thanks to George Dick for all his assistance on the night of Game 1. Cheers, George!

Game 1 – July 15 – MCG – 8pm
Australia 0
Man Utd 2 Blomqvist 47 (1st half), Butt 78

Game 2 – July 18 – Homebush – 3pm
Australia 0
Man Utd 1 Yorke 25

Socceroos	Game 1	Game 2	Man Utd	Game 1	Game 2
Michael Petkovic	X		Mark Bosnich	X	Xo79
Jason Petkovic		X	Raimond Van Der Gouw		so79
Joe Didulica					
			Phil Neville	X	X
Simon Colosimo	X	Xo31	Denis Irwin	Xyo64	X
Stan Lazaridis	X	X	David May	Xo79	
Hayden Foxe	X	X	Henning Berg	Xo79	X
Alex Tobin	X	X	Jaap Stam	so79	X
Stephen Laybutt	X	X	Wes Brown	so79	
Dragi Nastevski			John Curtis	so64	
			Michael Clegg	so83	
Zeljko Susa					
Brett Emerton	X	Xo74	Mark Wilson	Xo83	Xo66
Vince Grella	Xyo72	so74	Jonathan Greening	Xyo64	so70
Jacob Burns	so82	so31	Nicky Butt	X	X
Ross Aloisi	Xy	Xo74	Jesper Blomqvist	Xo74	
Danny Tiatto	Xo82		Ryan Giggs	so64	X
Kasey Wehrman	so72		Jordi Cruyff	so74	Xo70
Aurelio Vidmar	Xo88	Xo86	Dwyght Yorke	X	X
Clayton Zane	so88	so74	Andy Cole		Xo73
Michael Curcija		so86	Teddy Sheringham	X	so73
			Ole Gunnar Solskjaer		so66

Matildas - Back to the drawing board

Back in February when the draw for the Womens World Cup was made, Matildas coach Greg Brown made optimistic noises about making the semi finals.

"I feel confident we can beat either Japan, Russia or Canada to qualify for the next stage" claimed Brown, in a reference to the Group C teams which may have crossed Australia's path at the quarter-final stage. Sadly, that optimism was woefully misplaced, although by the end of the group phase at least the coach realised what had gone wrong. *"We didn't finish Ghana off, we didn't play well against Sweden..."*

If only it were that simple. The preparations didn't quite go to plan when the lead-up four matches produced one win from four starts, while Bridgette Starr and Alicia Ferguson both picked up injuries.

The Aussies luck seemed to have turned when Ghana's Barikisu Tetley-Quao was red-carded before the half-hour mark in the opening group match yet it took Australia a further 48 minutes to translate their numerical advantage into a scoreboard advantage. Even then it only lasted two minutes, but by then the damage was done.

The final insult was narrowly averted when Elizabeth Baidu's shot hit the post in stoppage time, but if Australia were to have any chance of progressing to thequarter-finals they needed a comprehensive victory in the opening game – as subsequent events would clearly display.

Having made plans to defend against Sweden at set pieces it was galling to see Sweden score from a corner inside the first ten minutes. Given the Swedes dominated the corner count 10-0 we should be grateful the match finished 3-1.

The start to the China match was even worse, with Alicia Ferguson copping an early bath for a dreadful tackle on Bai Jie. China cruised to a 3-1, rarely getting out of second gear and doing just enough to finish top of the group. Julie Murray completed a great tournament personally by laying on the pass for Cheryl Salisbury to write her name in the history books.

The unpalatable consequence of Australia's failure to make it to thequarter-final stage is that our place at the 2000 Olympics has not been earned on merit.

What now?

A four nation round-robin tournament is scheduled for December, when theMatildas will host Norway, the Czech Republic and hopefully the USA. We say hopefully because there have already been rumours about the US having something more important on their agenda. We shall see.

2003 – Getting ahead of ourselves?

Australia seems serious in mounting a bid to host the Womens World Cup in 2003 by announcing its intention to submit a formal bid in October. In truth, Australia is perfectly capable of hosting medium-sized soccer tournaments, and if the Education Department's help can be enlisted we may even see thousands of schoolgirls herded into packed medium-sized stadiums to cheer on their idols.

Not exactly fanciful stuff, and there is no doubt some hardcore support for hosting the 2003 WWC, but it is difficult to see it being anyway where as successful as the recent event in the US. For a start, we need a team that will capture the imagination of the nation.

But more importantly, devoting resources to a World Cup bid can only distract the honchos from their primary, immediate task – that is, to stage a successful 2000 Olympic Womens Tournament and provide the public with a team that actually IS capable of making the semi finals.

The Studs Up Report on the
The International Soccer Expo

Okay, so this report is just a fraction of the size we thought it would be. Let's just say that there is an extremely fine line between reporting what we saw, what we heard and what we were told, and libel. Over the past month or so we have attempted to contact a number of people who were central to the activities of that long weekend. Suffice to say that we will continue to pursue answers to questions we keep asking ourselves. But more on that later.

The concept

Here was a chance for Australian soccer to put on its best clothes and impress the hell out of hundreds of influential international soccer visitors. Unfortunately, most international visitors would have left the Expo in a state of bewilderment.
Where was the exhibition from the national federation, Soccer Australia? Where were the exhibitions from many of the leading NSL clubs, including the current national champions?

Enquiries have revealed a litany of disinterest, incompetence, and above all, a blatant disrespect for the fans of soccer in this country. In short, the Expo failed to live up to its own hype.

The venue.

Geographically, it was perfect. Just a short walk from Stadium Australia, the Main Dome provided a fitting environment for the event, with plenty of space for a genuine kick-about although the size of the NSL club stalls were a bit on the small side. Especially for the Sydney-based clubs who were often dealing with crowds three and four deep, which made things awkward when trying to walk down the aisles. But that is a minor quibble and can easily be amended next time (yes, there will be a next time).

But of more permanent concern is taps in the toilets, which are an accident waiting to happen. Over the course of the three days we witnessed countless examples of members of the public drenching themselves due to the unusual design of the taps. There were occasional funny scenes but a number of disabled and elderly visitors did not see the humourous side. SOCOG take note.

Are you being served?

The information desk was located in the front entrance portion of the dome, yet too often enquiries from the public were re-directed to the NSW Soccer stand. Thus, the NSW stand became the defacto information desk for Soccer Australia, Manchester United, the Socceroos and the various clubs who did not represent themselves.
The public phone set-up wasn't much help either, with many of them either not connected or simply not working, and ridiculously, no phone books, not even at the information desk.

Coming soon to a stall near you...

The confusion over the public appearances of the Socceroo's (and World Stars) became something of a running joke over the three days. On many occasions Socceroos were scheduled to make public appearances, only for the appointments to be delayed, and then sometimes cancelled. This only served to frustrate fans who had persuaded their parents to stay longer because "Bozza and Harry will be here soon..."

The one major surprise was the low profile accorded the Olyroos. Here after all, was the team that defeated the Euroroos 1-0 during the week, and will be expected to bear the brunt of the spotlight next year. The Expo seemed a perfect opportunity to give the young players the exposure they desperately needed. All soccer stakeholders have been vocal in their desire to raise the profile of the players, yet when the best-ever opportunity presents itself, we had a situation where some Olyroos, in camp at Parklea, are not in possession of tickets to the Expo.

Even had they been in possession of tickets, getting to Homebush would have presented a further conundrum, as other 'guests' discovered over the weekend.
While there were promises of a shuttle bus operating between Homebush and Parklea, it simply didn't eventuate, although there were unconfirmed reports that the shuttle actually operated on the Friday morning. Given the various state/national squads staying at Parklea over the weekend, it seemed inconceivable that such a shuttle service would not be available.

One other problem we just have to mention.

Real yellow card material, in fact. A real cause for embarrassment was the inability of the Expo organisers to provide adequate change rooms for the 2000 Olympic mascots.
You know the ones, the 8 foot echidna and platypus, Millie and all that.

In scenes which can only be described as farcical, the mascots were 'forced' to change in a makeshift space behind the video wall erected as part of the NSW Soccer exhibition.
The six foot costume would have been dreadfully uncomfortable to get into in a seven foot space, and must have made amusing viewing for the public on the balcony, until the SOCOG organisers thoughtfully threw a blanket over the top of the 'enclosure'

Next issue: Why so many clubs didn't bother participating, how Tariba West made a Japanese boy cry, and how Glenn A Baker bored everybody shitless in the Homebush International Media Centre.
But in the meantime, here's a piece of correspondence that might get you thinking about our opening paragraph.

Dear Studs Up,

Thanks for your inquiry, which in fact has a very simple explanation.

Fact is that the match was always WORLD STARS v AUSTRALIA. This was agreed between FIFA and Soccer Australia. The name FIFA was never officially associated with the World Stars team -- it was the media (especially that in Australia) who attached the name FIFA to the team and the match.

Therefore there was no question of FIFA withdrawing its name from something which did not bear it in the first place!

With best regards
Keith Cooper
FIFA

NSW Super League Wrap
with the Wolfman

The premiership rounds of the N S W State League season have been run and won with last season's Grand Final Runners Up **Bonnyrigg White Eagles** making it two minor premierships in a row. Despite losing their final round match against Canterbury-Marrickville by the odd goal in five, the Serbian backed club again showed it has the necessary talent to go one step better in 1999. Coached by ex Mount Druitt Town boss John Turner, the side is moulded around a tough and determined back four led by Mark Racker and Bonslav Dragas combined with some quality forwards in ex Wolves striker Colin Luff (16 goals) and Robert Gomez (10 goals). Colin Luff has sadly broken his leg and will miss the semi-final series, but Turner has combated the loss of injury Joe Brook (Marconi) and Ray Younes (Wollongong) to strengthen the squad while the N S L is in recess.

Cross town rivals **Blacktown City** were their own worst enemy again in the first round of the competition when they dropped the final round match to Parramatta Eagles 4-1. After sitting on first or second spot for the majority of the season coach Brian Brown had his eyes on the top prize but three losses in a month at the end of the season cost the side the valuable three points needed to finish on top. All is not lost because the Demons still get the double chance, and as they will be sure to have their eyes on the prize they will be the team to beat for the title. Strikers Jon Angelico (10 goals) and Jamal Ben-Nejit (14 goals) have provided the way to goal and are ably supported by a top line squad of players including Damien Foxe (Hayden's older brother), Damien Brown, Stuart Cleary and Steve Berry back from a stint with Sydney United.

Third-placed third with 43 points were the sadly erratic **Macarthur Rams**. Unfortunately for the rapidly developing district club, the resignation of coach Casey De Bruin only seven weeks before the end of the season has done little to help ease the worries of a side whose form has been nothing short of erratic. Martin Bourke the former Wollongong Wolves midfielder took charge of the side until the under 18s coach Brian Dene was appointed for the remainder of the season. For a side boasting the talents of Jimmy Aschner, John Crawley, Richard Lloyd and Dion Valle, the lack of form must be a worry to coach Dene as he looks to settle a lineup on the eve of the finals.

In fourth and fifth spot **Parramatta Eagles** (41 points) and **Bankstown City Lions** (40 points) pipped Super League newcomers the Fairfield Bulls (37 points) for their seasons to continue at least another week. Under the direction of former Marconi player Roberto Viera, Parramatta have put together a solid second round and made a run for the finals, the final round win against Blacktown City a testiment to their determination. Grant Bard the former Sutherland striker has again found his scoring boots and his contribution to the side in pressure games cannot be underestimated. A young African born midfielder by the name of Baltamodou Conde has appeared with the side in recent weeks and developed a cult following among the fans. His name is definitely noted for higher honours in the Wolfman's little black book.

Bankstown City Lions were one of the most enigmatic teams in the competition. A second round loss to the struggling Sutherland Sharks was more than matched by wins over Fairfield Bulls, Macarthur Rams and Parramatta Eagles. The midseason resignation of coach Sakib Tovic forced the club to appoint 39 year old Mile Todoroski as player/coach for the second round of the season. Recruiting Wolves midfielder Sasha Dimoski the side gelled in the run home to finish three points in front of the enigmatic **Fairfield Bulls** side which seemed to self destruct in the final few weeks. After leading the competition for two weeks early on in the season, the Bulls faded in the month of June and even the canny coaching of 'Jinky' Joe Walsh could do little to arrest their slide.

Two standouts for the Bulls this season were strikers Mathew Borg and Mark Hoenselaars who scored 15 and 17 goals in the season respectively. The Wolfman also reports that rumours of Walsh's departure from Fairfield are gathering momentum as the Bulls now seek to develop their social facilities located at the Nineveh Club next door, at the expense of their footballing operations.

The Leichhardt Tigers (35 points) were next on the ladder missing out on the semi-finals by two clear wins. Although competitive for most of the season the club has been troubled again by internal disputes which led to some disappointing on-field performances. The recruitment of Steve Karavalakis and John Buonavoglia as mid season 'mercenaries' did little to arrest their decline so it will be an anxious wait for former Socceroo and all round nice bloke Arno Bentogna to see if he has the 'gig' next season.

Canterbury-Marrickville were another 'traditional' club in the same boat as the Tigers. Finishing with 34 points the Greek backed club have parted ways with the coach and club stalwart John Xipolitas. Player discontent was reportedly rife in the camp with the selection policies of the club under the spotlight. It wasn't surprising to see a couple of their 'profile' players leave the Henson Park headquarters midseason in search of greener pastures. Even the Canterbury side senior players like Nick Bosevski and Jane Talcevski did little to inspire the side while former A.I.S. and Sydney Olympic forward Jimmy Nikas was in Greece trialing for a contract.

The bottom four sides were all district clubs and fought out a 'mini competition' amongst themselves for the majority of the season. **Ryde City** finished with the honour of 'best of the rest' nading 5 wins and 4 draws to give them 18 points. Losing Scott Ollerenshaw at an early part of the season dropped the clubs morale as was the loss of his striking partner Aydin Cetinay. With Ollerenshaw retired coach and independent tyre guru Les DeCelis resorted to the introduction of some younger players which saw the club record some giant killing wins at vital stages of the season. The clubs nomadic existance without a home ground continues to dog the club and this may prove to be their undoing in the eyes of the federation if suitable arrangements can't be made. Wentworth Park is a quality football ground but too far from their district to be considered a permanent home.

The Central Coast are one club that have no such problems with the location of their home ground, but seem to have a lot of problems winning games on it. Coach Allan Bourke could do little as his side scored only 17 goals in 22 matches, the lowest in Super League. Apart from Peter 'Stirley' Preston the side was devoid of any real talent on the forward line and must look to recruit a few talents in that department if they are to have any real chance to improve.

This is the same for **Sutherland** who during their season unearthed an exciting 16 year old striker in Kris Kanaracos. With Craig Hinkins having a horrid year in front of goals, the young Kanaracos started the winning goal in 2 of Sutherlands 4 wins and showed a touch of class which had been missing from the Sharks games. Stuart Porter, the clubs 19 year old under 18s coach and all round ladies man of the Sutherland Shire, answered the SOS from coach John Lavis midseason and put the boots on to help the club in the final run home. Their continuation in the top flight was cemented with victory against wooden spooners Eastern Suburbs in the last week of the competition.

The **Eastern Suburbs Wanderers** will be doing their wandering next season in the first division after their season ended in utter shambles and the wooden spoon. John Callega, their coach tried very hard to try to mould a side but with the club enduring a financial crisis it was hard to recruit the quality players he needed to be competitive on a weekly basis. A move to a new home ground at Hensley Field, Pagewood eventuated too late in the season, and the aptly named Wanderers spent most of the season alternating between Wentworth Park and the visiting sides home ground.

Not easy when your trying desperately in the final rounds to gain points to avoid certain relegation. With the federation stipulating that the bottom club would be relegated the Wanderers appear certain to be playing their games against clubs like the Illawarra Lions and AP. Unitas in 2000. A great season from Peter Pullicino at the back and apparent import Nikola Ilsaya were the only highlights for a disappointed Callega

In keeping his nose on the ground during the final rounds of Super League, the Wollman has been privy to some interesting news on the terraces. It appears that the N S W Soccer Federation is pushing the barrow very hard to get the N S L second division up and running for the season 2000/1. So far four clubs have signalled their intention to be involved. Blacktown City, Parramatta Eagles, Sutherland Sharks and Macarthur Rams have all declared their hand while the Serbian backed Bonnyrigg White Eagles have surprisingly elected not to participate. It will be interesting to see if Messrs Tuby and the board can develop the competition in the forthcoming months in consultation with their financially poorer southern cousins the V S F.

The Federation have also revived a cup competition of sorts, the **David Carty/Peter Forsyth Memorial Cup**. Taking the place of the sadly defunct Waratah Cup competition, the series starts in August 11th and involves all of the N S W and A C T based N S L clubs with Parramatta Eagles, Bonnyrigg White Eagles and Blacktown City from the Super League. Conducted on a knock out basis, the competition will be a good hit-out for the NSL clubs against three of Super League's best performed clubs.

Whether the clubs and the fans take the cup seriously will be of note to the federation hierarchy who are rumoured to be considering a return of the recently defunct Waratah Cup competition in the seasons to come. The Wollman and Lotus Rover will again be out on the terraces during the cup and the final series and bring another report in Sv#2.

NSW Super League Final table - 1999

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	22	15	1	6	65	37	46
Blacktown City Demons	22	14	2	6	48	25	44
Macarthur Rams	22	14	1	7	40	24	43
Parramatta Eagles	22	13	2	7	46	23	41
Bankstown City Lions	22	13	1	8	43	31	40
Fairfield Bulls	22	11	4	7	45	38	37
Leichhardt Tigers	22	11	2	9	43	37	35
Canterbury-Marrickville	22	10	4	8	33	36	34
Ryde City	22	5	4	13	26	37	19
Central Coast	22	4	4	14	17	45	16
Sutherland	22	4	3	15	20	55	15
Eastern Suburbs Wanderers	22	3	2	17	24	62	11

***And Green Rover** brings us up to date with the 1st and 2nd Divisions*

FIRST DIVISION COMES TO A CLOSE

Manly Warringah wrapped up the NSW Division One title when they beat Stanmore Hawks away on the Saturday and drew with St George at home on the Sunday in the penultimate round of games in mid July. Manly coached by the ebullient Tony Pezzano, had a shoestring budget and lost a number of players during the season for various reasons but clung to their strong lead when many thought they would falter.

Challengers St George could not reproduce their solid home form on their travels and fumbled to narrow defeats at grounds they found weren't to their liking. Losing at Stanmore Rockdale, Illawarra and Hurstville, all clubs in the top group, brought them undone, but the loss at home to bottom dogs Moorebank sank them completely. They were left to fight it out with Stanmore for the second spot, but looked like hanging on for third anyway. They also survived a coaching confrontation with the committee on no fewer than two occasions and the loss of most of last year's relegated Super League team, before a ball was kicked in anger.

Stanmore were also inconsistent, but good entertainers, while Penrith, playing as amateurs, did well to finish in the five and attracted over 5,000 to a promotional day when Moorebank were the visitors to Penrith Park, home of their backers, the Penrith Rugby League club.

It was a very poor year for promoted Dulwich Hill who formerly had their ranks Depots Depots like in the season and were still looking for a last game win against Moorebank to stay in the league, possibly via a relegation play-off.

There was very little to choose between all the other teams who all loomed as finals contenders at various stages, even Auburn and Bathurst gave a yelp towards the end having endured some horror stretches.

Manly's Dean Harding proved the Comeback King when he came out of the local Manly league to reclaim a place in the Federation side and wound up a runaway top scorer with over 21 goals for the season, a goal a game.

His brief flirtation with Blacktown City after a previous spell at Manly saw him withdraw into the less fulfilling all-age competition, but the move to bring him out of retirement paid huge dividends and he proved an able replacement for Tony Krslovic who moved on to Second division Hajduk Wanderers.

And the club also unearthed Adam Townsend, brother of the more famous Danny, of Sydney United fame. This near replica pint sized family member was a key player in the Dolphins premiership winning side.

SECOND DIVISION SOON TO BE DECIDED

With two rounds to play the title race was still undecided, but two clubs had settled down to slug it out. Fraser Park, backed by the Portuguse community in the inner suburbs was slugging it out with the aforementioned Hajduk Wanderers from the outer west (they were once known as West Wanderers).

And the two were due to meet on Sunday 1st August at Hajduk Stadium with just goal difference between them going into the game on Super League Grand Final day.

Which is where we came in.

Aussies in Germany

Andre Kruger summarises their efforts this past season

Another long season finished in Germany with a dramatic finale. A few weeks before the end Bayern Munich were crowned champions, but the battle to avoid the final relegation place was a thriller. A goal in the final minutes destroyed the hopes of Nuremberg, the club who was in 12th place prior to that last match.

So what's to say about the Australians in Deutschland? Since last year, the second league is a new home for players from Down Under.

First up something about David Zdrilic, the best and most successful player over the year. In 33 games, Zdrilic scored 12 goals and was one of Ulm's best players in a team with no big names. Ulm were promoted last year from the third division and moved straight to the first division. There was a lot of talk that Zdrilic may go to 1860 Munich or to Stuttgart, but I recently called the Sport Director and he said that David will play his first Bundesliga season with the club from the Neckar River. As a further guide to his success, David was voted seventh best striker in Germany's second league.

On the 14th of July, Zdrilic signed a two year contract with SSV Ulm. Team manager Erich Steer said "It was a lot of work and I was close to a nervous breakdown, but now everything is perfect. David will stay two years longer. A big victory for the club."
Mr. Steer had many meetings with Fredi Strasser, the team manager from Swiss club FC Aarau, because they had the transfer rights on the player. Ulm has to pay now 500 000 German Marks.

Aarau wanted 2,000,000, so it looks like Ulm made a great deal. But if the club sells Zdrilic in the near future, most of the money goes to the Manager from Switzerland, and if he plays a good first Bundesliga season, they can earn much more money with David.

Ulm is now in a little Aussie fever. In recent weeks Peter Buljan has joined with the Team and in two friendlies he scored four times. The 21 year-old player now goes with Ulm to a training camp near Austria. Coach Andermatt is impressed with Peter. "He is a highly talented player with a lot of technique and he is very dangerous in the goal area."
The chances are good for him to get a contract. Last year Buljan played 27 games for Canberra Cosmos.

As I reported in a recent SU, Robert Middleby transferred from Uerdingen, the club has to go down one division to Eintracht Trier in the third League. This year in Uerdingen he played only 4 games before he was sacked by the coach. Trier had the chance to gain promotion to the second division, but they lost their final two games. Also versus Kickers Offenbach who had Alex Kotevich playing reserves football for the Regionalliga Sud (Southern Region) club. In Trier, Middleby is only on the bench.

Against all odds, Tony Sekulic also had a respectable year. But Pokerface Tony wants to get a new, better paid contract. The Manager of Mainz said only about that, "If he thinks he is much better than the money he earns now, he has to look for another club". Sekulic later changed his mind and now he wants to stay and has now signed a new contract.

Frank Juric (the only Australian player in the league who did not want to give a paid free interview to me) had a good year in a very bad team. 29 matches in the first eleven, but when it was sure that Duesseldorf has to go, he lost the fun to play soccer and I saw a few very simple goals against him. In one of the last games he has to start on the bench, but his substitute earns a red card. So Frank came back and within five minutes had to carry the ball three times out of his net.

But he is a good keeper and coach Christoph Daum from Bayer Leverkusen had an eye on him. So, Juric got a three year contract, but he is also only the third keeper in the squad. The latest news is that the second choice keeper from Leverkusen is looking for a new club. Daum said that he wants to buy a new "star 'keeper'" reducing the chance for Frank to earn a place in the first eleven.

A few months ago, the coach from Guetersloh said that Mark Silic is a high talented player. But the coach was wrong. After a few training sessions, the manager said that they have no use for Mark, so they signed another Aussie, Danny Ailovic. But at the end of the season the club went down to the third division and they finished the contract also with Danny. Guetersloh is not the best place for Australians. Both players did not play a single game.

For the three so called "first class" Aussies, the year was not the best. After seven games Paul Agostino was out of the race, and after a few operations he needed time to rest. In the middle of the season, he thought about a move to England, but 1860 did not want to let him go.

His Team mate Ned Zelic played the whole year in a team that started very successful, but after the season they were only in the middle of the league. Four games before the end of the season, Ned played his 100th First Bundesliga game in Deutschland (33 matches last year).

It was an unlucky year for Joe Simunic, out since the summer last season. His contract is now over, but Hamburg have asked him to stay another 12 months. It's now up to him if he wants to stay longer in Germany.

And finally, one of the major talking points in the last soccer season was - we have the first Australian champion in German Football!

Werder Bremen, the club from northern Germany has two jewels in their youth team, Australia's U17 Joey's Fabian Lettieri and Joseph Di Iorio. The team from the Weser River wants to build them up very slowly but surely.

Werder was strong enough to reach the German U17 Championship Final this year after some thrilling matches. The press said that the youngsters were going into the final against VFB Stuttgart as underdogs, but in a very good game, Werder won 4:1.

I saw that game live on television, and it impressed me greatly. Fabian was only on the bench, but Joseph played a fantastic game. Fast and dangerous in every situation. The boy who scored 10 goals in Australia's qualifying games made a great goal and had the chance to score twice more.

The young boys celebrated their victory in front of 4,500 people like the first team two weeks ago, when Bremen beat Bayern Munich. In one or two years I am sure I will see the Joey's in the first eleven. I am a little bit unlucky, because the training camp for the full Joeys squad in Germany next month was cancelled. I wanted to see all five games and meet the team to do some further interviews! Now I have to wait again.

An Interview with Tony Sekulic

By Andre Kruger

Earlier this season I went to the Niedersachsen Stadium in Hanover to see my home town team playing versus Mainz 05. Not a big second division clash, but I wanted to meet another Aussie, Tony Sekulic. The game was not bad, Hanover won 3:2 with a goal five minutes from the end. A fast and hard fought game with five goals and not a bad game from Tony.

Mr. Sekulic was unhappy to score the first goal. Unhappy? Yes, because it was in his own net. But the result is not important for me. I'm just eager to snap a few words.

Andre Krueger: Tony, it's your first season in Germany, how do you like it?
Tony Sekulic: Well, its my first year as a professional in Germany. It's very different from playing in Australia, but I am enjoying it very much. It's a very big learning experience for the first season in Europe. But, yes, I'm enjoying my football here.

A.K.: What do you think about the German soccer in the second League. Is it stronger than Australia's A-League?
T.S.: The soccer here in German second league is stronger than Australia's A-League, with the tempo of the game, fitness, strength and speed. But one thing Australian players have more of is the skill, that is one thing missing in the second league. Also you can not compare Australia's A-League with Europe when Australia's League is not professional.

A.K.: What do you think about the country Germany, cold, a lot of rain and far away from your home, friends and families. Are you homesick at all?
T.S.: Well, Germany is cold, lot of rain, snow, hail and everything else. I will always miss home, my friends and family, but I've got over the homesickness. My new home now is Germany and I'm enjoying my time here and hopefully there is many more to come yet.
I can speak the German language now. After the season of 1998/99 finishes, I'm going to Australia for my wedding and start a new life with my wife Marija in Germany. She's learning German now in Australia. Germany is a very beautiful country and I love it here. I would like to keep my career here.

A.K.: Do you have the wish to play sometimes in the First Bundesliga or in England or is that just a dream?
T.S.: As I say dreams come true only if you work hard enough. My aim is the first Bundesliga. When I first came to Germany I was on test trial with Eintracht Frankfurt, but the problem was I went there without a Manager. I was there for two weeks, after the trial I was picked up by a Manager. But with hard work here in Mainz, the first Bundesliga cannot be far away now. I've already been having talks two clubs in the first league.

A.K.: How do you get the contract with Mainz? They saw you sometimes playing in Australia?
T.S.: It was all through a football Manager. At first I was on test in Belgium with RWD Molenbeek. I was there for two weeks and they wanted me to stay, but I left to go to Eintracht. Things didn't work out the way I wanted. So I went to Croatia for a holiday and Hajduk Split picked me up. I had training there for three weeks. We were talking about contracts, but we did not come to an agreement, so I left for Mainz to see what they had to offer me. If I did not sign with Mainz, I would have gone back to Hajduk Split.

A.K.: Are you in contact with the other Aussies in the second League, like Juric or Zdrilic?
T.S.: Well, I do keep in contact with David Zdrilic of Ulm and Dennis Arkovic of Guetersloh. I played with both players in Australia. With another player, Juric from Duesseldorf, I have a little contact.

A.K.: How big are your chances of playing for Australia sometime? Do you want to play for your country?
T.S.: My chances of playing for Australia have improved since coming to Europe, but it all depends on my performance, and at this moment I'm playing very well so I have a good chance. My next goal at this moment is to play for Australia on June 12th against the World XI for the opening of the new Olympic Stadium in Sydney in front of 112,000 people. But I've also been contacted for the national team of Croatia, it's only small talk yet.

A.K.: What do you think about the Soccer in Australia at the moment, after the miss of the World Cup and the last disaster at the Oceania Nations Cup?
T.S.: Well, not winning a place in the World Cup was a very big setback for Australian soccer and Australia as a country.
The league in Australia would have improved 1.000.000%, turning professional and keeping most of the overseas based players home. Lots more money and sponsorship.
The loss of the Oceania Nation Cup was a disaster. The Confederations Cup has been Australia's World Cup event. It puts players on the world scene. They thought they could win it by using Australian based player's, not using Europeans. New Zealand taught them a lesson.

A.K.: Is there a chance for your fans far away home in Down Under to see you once again back in the A-League?
T.S.: That's a difficult question. When my dream has been to play football in Europe, and now I am here and I want to stay. But there is a chance towards the end of my career when I am around 30-31 years old to play the last two years back in Australia's A-League and end up taking up a coaching job to bring some European knowledge to Australia. But that's in the back of my mind now. I want to concentrate more on Mainz and getting to the first Bundesliga.

A.K.: Do you want to say something to your fans on this way?
T.S.: I would just like to say to my fans here in Germany and Australia, thank you for all the support and my career could be taking a big leap - step - forward. I am currently talking to a couple of other clubs. Success only comes with hard work. Also Hajduk Split would like to have me back for the 1999/2000 season. It all depends on the talk.

A.K.: Tony, good luck for your future here in Germany and all the best for your Soccer career, and thanks a lot for that interview.
T.S.: You're welcome. If you have anymore questions that need to be answered or to ask, let me know ... and please, send me a copy of your magazine Studs Up. Thank you.

If anybody has a question to Tony or any of the Aussies in Germany, please pass on your requests to me at:

Tottenbrink 14, 30659 Hannover,
GERMANY

With the best wishes, Andre, zoh German

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Dear Studs Up P O Box 53, Oakleigh South 3167

And first up is Paul Gearing with an insight the type of discussion which takes place at a club facing the crossroads.

I am writing to report on the meeting of "The True Blues" (affiliated to the Carlton Soccer Club) held at Paynums Restaurant on June 19th, 1999. There were about 30 people in attendance, including four on the committee. I thought your readers may be interested in the proceedings.

The day started at 10.30am, when the chair basically put their views to all at the meeting - that "The True Blues" would hope to become the soul of the Carlton Soccer Club, by meeting on a regular basis, and put the views of the 'grass roots' supporters to the governing board of the club.

It was stipulated that we "The True Blues" would only be able to implement those things that were in our power, fundraising, away trip coach rides etc. so we should concentrate on these things. However, he also made it clear that the governing body would have to listen to us 'grass roots' supporters, as consumers, particularly if "The True Blues" as a body were to grow in number.

After the general meeting's opening we went on to issues. Issues ranged from anxieties about Carlton's sales of players, and whether they are being replaced. The pros and cons of the new venue (Olympic Park) and the Friday night time slot, marketing etc.

After about one hour, the chair read out four letters from absentees. The letters contained fairly general things, however I took note that three out of four letters mentioned changing the name of The Carlton Soccer Club, an issue I feel quite strongly on.

After the letters, the chair offered each of us (starting from left to right as the room) the opportunity to say our piece if we wished. I was first and spoke as best I could (armed with the strength of the three out of four previously read letters) my views on why I feel that the name of Carlton narrows the field of supporters who may be affiliated with other A.F.L. clubs.

We all know that Carlton Soccer Club is an independent body but the perception within the public in general is not so, therefore I feel it is a negative to growth of the club. As we went round to other members, issues were mainly marketing, the name and player sales. Most mentioned the name change and I feel that a slightly more would prefer a change. One gentleman said outright "I would like to see us become Melbourne United." There were quite a few ambivalent. About three said they were quite happy with the name, one of which said he "would leave the club if it weren't called Carlton". However he was a life member. I don't think the issue will go to sleep and I will suggest perhaps some market research to the committee at the next opportunity.

We adjourned for lunch after which new coach Stuart Munro comes in, followed shortly after by Lou Sticca. Stewart gives us a small speech on his new job and his challenge. Full of positives, like we want to hear. He tells us that he is chasing four overseas players. He doesn't expect to get them all, but has one certainty.

Next up, Lou Sticca tells us how the club is going. His regrets about sacking Eddie, how in his stint at Carlton he has made some sound decisions but has also made some mistakes (ask Eddie).

Then up comes that contentious issue of the name change. And I would like to point out that he wasn't present at the morning meeting. He said we shouldn't be thinking of a name change. It's Carlton we're stuck with and that is what we should be supporting. However he did say that is until someone comes along with a million dollars and says you can be called such and such. I am about to write the cheque right now - Melbourne United. Lou also said some general things like player's wage bills etc.

Peter Jess has arrived also and gives us a general speech, weighing heavily on the cost of running a club, again player's wage bills etc. When asked by the chair what was his most significant lesson since coming aboard with soccer he thinks briefly and says, "the lacking of good management at all levels". Even at Soccer Australia there is much to be desired. Most would agree there.

After the meeting the chair emphasised that one speaker was promised but we got three. The point is,he said, the management have come to listen.

And next we have Kasey Puyenbroek who forewarned us that "This is an emotional piece, so those expecting rational argument can turn the page"'

"It is a dark day for the rebellion."

I am absolutely dumbfounded and disappointed beyond belief. How could Adelaide be excluded and a UEFA Sydney club be included. In my opinion Parramatta Power deserve to be in the NSL, but why 5 clubs.

Why not a third Adelaide club? Why is there a 5 cap on the number of Adelaide clubs when obviously no such creature exists for Sydney? Does means 6 of 7/17 clubs come from NSW.

Add one from close by Canberra, and the 4 in Victoria, and that's 12/17 teams in the old Melbourne Sydney bloc! Why bother calling it a national comp?

Also, if there did for some reason have to be only 2 teams in Adelaide, why was a club which is in the hands of administrators, with a proven record of underachievement both on and off the park, as well as rampant instability at board level, and representative of only one ethnic minority, chosen over a bid that encompassed all of Adelaide (no ethnic baggage there!).

Sure they were untried and new, but so were Glory and Sport, as well as successful applicants Power and Auckland. Southern Stars/Adelaide Sharks - bah! Different name, same old team, same old administration('till they get the shits and piss off!), same old ideas and same old crowds, or lack thereof. If any of their games are broadcast on the ABC the rest of Oz will get a great look at the beautiful new Hindmarsh Stadium, 'cos there won't be any people to block the view!

Wait until 2000/01 eh? When (if!) SoccAus get up the balls to actually admit a multi cultural Sport/Glory style club from Adelaide (United or otherwise), and by consequence, boot out one or both of the incumbents, and it is successful beyond all expectations, the powers that be will probably look around dumb founded and surprised.

"Where did all these people come from?", they'll say. City and the Sharks only got 5000 and 3000 a game. How wonderful of us to have thought to let them in, we should have done it sooner. Until that wonderful day, this is a disappointed and disillusioned Kasey opting off. See you at an NSL ground next season (I'll be the one going to everyone else's games to support their teams 'cos SoccAus won't give me one of my own!).

Kasey

PS Now that I've got that off my chest, I can go back to being normal (I hope!). Can't wait until next season, it's going to be a doozie!!

ANY Reason To Celebrate

BY GEOFF *"THAT'S THE SPIRIT"* COY

Well there might not have been much in the trophy cabinet at the end of the season for Northern Spirit (that's if you exclude the Sydney Cup) but that didn't stop Spirit supporters from celebrating their inaugural season in style.

First up in June there was the "Spirit's Fly" Ball at the Darling Harbour Convention Centre. Talk about putting on the Ritz. The $120 a head turnout saw the who's who of NSW politics mixing it with players, officials, stakeholders, supporters and even a mad dog ex Socceroo coach.

Vince Sorrenti as MC stole the show in his imminent no holds barred style of comedy. Vince felt right at home in lambasting the NSW Liberal Party and its representatives, one Remo Nogorrollo and Kerry Chockarovski. The Italian community also came in for its fair share.

Top billing of the night went to those cashed up sponsors and supporters who were prepared to hand out big bucks in the auction for framed autographed players shirts.

First up was Mark Ruden's shirt that went for $1300. Rude's scored Spirit's first ever competition goal in the match against Carlton at Optus Oval back in October. This was followed by Krosimir Marusic, Harry Kewell's Leeds United shirt and then Arnold's and Slater's shirts that fetched between 4,500 and $5,000.

As for the player awards Paul Henderson took out the Player of the Year award and in a somewhat surprising announcement Paul Bilokopic took out the Players' Player of the Year award. Bill Collins, the club physio took out the award for the most valuable clubman.

It was advertised as a black tie affair but the Bob Stander's in their own inevitable style were not to be outdone on the night. Tancred Fergus was resplendent in his Town Cryer's attire, as was the much photographed John McCormack in his Brigadoon outfit. Not to mention Mrss Evelyn as "Twin Peaks".

The best dressed player on the night went to Chi Chi Mendez complete with hat, tails and cane. It was good to see Chi Chi make an appearance since falling out of favour with Graham Arnold.

On the 10th July the supporters held their own awards night not far from the maddening. The location was North Sydney Leagues Bowling Club just a stones throw from the Bob Stand at NSO. The cost was a much more reasonable $10.00 per head which included a B-B-Q and drinks at bar prices.

The night was attended by over 100 supporters in addition to a good representation of players and officials. The supporters went to great lengths in preparing a video presentation of the past season in addition to the numerous awards presented on the night.

By far and away the most popular award of the night was the Willie Award (supporters mascot is Free Willie) for Biggest Dick of the Year.

That, as no surprise went to Channel X weather man and ground announcer, Tim Bailey. Fortunately Tim was unable to attend the event to collect his award. Hopefully he won't be seen around NSO again.

For some reason unbeknown to me, Robbie Slater was also given "Biggest Pisshead of the Year" award and was promptly asked to down a yard glass. Something he did with a degree of difficulty.

Surely, Paul Bilokopic should have won an award for bolting the most number of durries at the club after a game!

But the biggest disappointment was the absence of an award for John, the man behind the Hendo Doll. For those not familiar, Hendo Doll is a ventriloquist doll resplendent in goalkeeper gear and cap who sits on John's arm in the Bob Stand.

On the back of John's Spirit replica shirt is embroidered the words *"Holy Spirit give us a goal"*. John was blessed the first time he wore the shirt as Spirit promptly put four (4) past Marconi. Next season, Hendo Doll will be wired for sound following John's recent visit to a Manly showroom.

All aside it was an enjoyable night albeit in stark contrast to the club's version but nevertheless one that is sure to be on next season's calendar of events.

And the winners were.....

Supporters Llama Award for the player with Best Humour - Paul Bilokapic
Golden Boot Award for most goals scored at home - Krasimir Marusic
Supporters Coach of the Year - Graham Arnold (Manly Bus Company - runner up)
Golden Goal Award for Best Goal - Daniel Watkins
Supporters Junior Development Award - Phil Moss
Most Approachable Player Award - Robbie Slater
Supporters Player of the Year Award - Paul Henderson
Supporters of the year - Darren & Damon (attendance at 14 home & 9 away games)
Best Supporters Web Site - Chris Dunkerley (SU reader) and An Chia

Media Movements

Just enough space left to mention that there seems to have been as many moves off the park as there has been on it during the off season, with some fans suggesting the moves off the park may have a more lasting impact.

Australian & British Soccer Weekly has undergone another change at the editor's desk, with Aidan Ormond not returning from holidays and suddenly cropping up as the head honcho at Inside Soccer, which has itself undergone some leadership changes.
Long time soccer scribe and publishing mogul Bruce Campbell has passed on the baton to ex-ABSWer John Vrtanic, and it seems a number of ex-ABSWers have decided to chuck in their lot with the new management at IS.

Bruce meanwhile has launched 'The Australian Sporting Times' to mixed reviews, with the aim of cementing it in the hearts and minds of general Aussie-loving sports fans across the land. Without wishing to poo-poo the laudable intentions of Mr Campbell, and we certainly DO wish him luck with the new venture, plenty of others with bigger budgets have tried to publish a successful 'Sports Weekly' before, and most of them have gone belly up within six months. Bruce has managed to entice Derek Royal to follow him to 'TAST' but if anyone manages to see Derek and Bruce in the same room can they please send a photo to us at the usual address 'cos we have this bet with this bloke you see....

And finally, Studs Up has also undergone a few changes (what's new?) at the helpdesk so once again we – along with all the other soccer publications – plead for a bit of understanding while the er, industry undergoes its latest shake-up.

Did you hear the one about...

Yep, it's the off season. Which means there are a load of movements both on and off the park. The following list is by no means official or complete, it's just been collected via a series of phone calls, faxes, e-mails and good ol' fashion rumours. And as is the norm with this type of list, as soon as you print it it's out of date. But here goes anyway...

	From	To
Con Anthopoulos	Carlton	Panathinaikos (trials)
Zlatko Arambasic	KC Oostende	Sydney Olympic
Walter Ardone	Sydney United	Parramatta Power
Jason Batty	Geylang United, Singapore	Auckland Kings
Matt Bell	Brisbane	Hiberman (trials)
Steve Berry	Sydney United	Parramatta Power
Milan Blagojevic	Sydney Olympic	Parramatta Power
Con Blatsis	South Melbourne	Olympiakos
Didier Bonnet	Northern Spirit	Sydney United
Mark Bosnich	Aston Villa	Manchester United
Marco Bresciano	Carlton SC	Empoli, Italy
Peter Bulum	Canberra Cosmos	Perth Glory
Jason Byrnes	Sydney United	Parramatta Power (released)
Tony Carbone	Perth Glory	Canberra Cosmos
Alex Castro	Adelaide Sharks	Northern Spirit
Simon Catanzaro	NSWIS	Wollongong (released)
Alvin Ceccoli	AEK Athens	Hiberman (trials)
Gianfranco Cercelo	Perth Glory	Ajax
Angelo Costanzo	Adelaide City	Carlton
Jason Culina	Sydney Olympic	Auckland Kings
Craig Deans	Western Knights	Newcastle Breakers
Fred de Jong	Central FC, NZ	Parramatta Power
Travis Dodd	Adelaide City	Perth Glory
Steve Engleton	Sydney United	Wimbledon (released)
Ivan Ergic	AIS	Barnsley (trials)
Craig Foster	Crystal Palace	Parramatta Power
Paul Foster	Northern Spirit	Empoli (deal now permanent)
Michael Garcia	Perth Glory	Parramatta Power (released)
Mike Gibson	Sydney United	Leeds ?
Vince Grella	Carlton	Bayer Leverkusen
Joel Griffiths	Sydney United	Cercle Brugge
Andy Harper	Brisbane Strikers	Belmare Hiratsuka
Danny Hay	Perth	South Melbourne
Frank Juric	Fortuna Dusseldorf	Carlton
Lorenz Kindtner	KV Oostende	Lommel, Belgium
Steve Laybutt	Brisbane Strikers	Sydney Olympic
Anthony Magnacca	Sunshine Georgies	Carlton SC
John Markovski	Perth Glory	Fiorentina
Kresimir Marusic	Northern Spirit	Carlton
Gabriel Mendez	Northern Spirit	Parramatta Power
Dave McPherson	Hearts, Scotland	Canberra Cosmos
Paul Okon	Lazio	Sydney United
Andrew Packer	Brisbane	Auckland
Richard Piesa	Sydney United	Parramatta Power
Jason Polak	South Melbourne	Northern Spirit
Tom Pondeljak	Melbourne Knights	Auckland Kings
Wynton Rufer	World All-Stars	
Michael Santalab	Sydney United	
David Seal	Northampton Town	
Eiko van Steeden	Carlton SC	

Marcus Stergiopoulos	Carlton SC	Auckland Kings
Mile Sterjovski	Sydney United	Parramatta Power
Danny Townsend	Sydney United	Parramatta Power
David Tornaello	Adelaide City	Carlton
Luka Tomich	Marconi Fuebelt	Newcastle Breakers
Michael Turnbull	AIS	Northern Spirit
Aurelio Vidmar	Sanfrecce Hiroshima	Adelaide City (released)
Andy Vlahos	Panathinaikos	Parramatta Power
Joe Vrkic	Sydney United	Perth Glory
Kasey Wehrman	Brisbane Strikers	Sydney Olympic
Lindsay Wilson	Canberra Cosmos	Munich 1860
David Zdrilic	SVV Ulm	Adelaide City
Ivan Zelic	Canberra Cosmos	

Moving the goalposts by Harry Georgiadis

Recent changes by Britain's Department of Education and Employment to work permit criteria for non-European Union players could have serious repercussions for Aussies hoping for a career in Britain. Future permit applications will be judged according to the following criteria:

- *Players must have appeared in 75% of their country's competitive international fixtures in the previous two years, friendlies won't count.*
- *The Fifa ranking of the players' national side over the last two years will be taken into account.*
- *Work permits will be valid for the length of the players' contract with the club.*

Concern at the flood of foreigners in British football has prompted the new measures. They don't affect the Aussies eligible for EU citizenship through their parentage but for those that don't have that luxury it could be well nigh impossible to play in Britain.

The inclusion of a country's ranking as a factor in determining permit eligibility could hit Aussie players particularly hard.

The Socceroos ranking has dipped alarmingly since the 1998 World Cup qualifiers (it currently stands at 61, down 22 places since December 1998) and shows no sign of immediate improvement.

Our last full international was in the United States in November 1998 and with more and more emphasis being put on the Olyroos in the run up to the Olympics, our ranking could hit triple figures by this time next year.

The clause calling for players to have appeared in 75% of their country's full international fixtures is not new but in future only competitive, not friendly, matches will be taken into consideration.

This discriminates against Oceania members in particular who generally play fewer fixtures than members of other confederations.

Assuming Confederation Cup matches are deemed 'competitive' by British authorities, Australia has played fewer than 20 competitive international in the past two years. Compared to the number played by some South American, African and East European nations in the same period, it becomes obvious that, without EU citizenship, our players could find it extremely difficult to play in Britain.

On the other hand, players fortunate enough to be awarded a permit will have it validated for the length of their contract and won't have to renew it every season.

A panel will assess applications where evidence shows a player to be of the highest calibre but doesn't fulfil the criteria. Steve Horvat, again linked with a move to West Ham United, could be the first Aussie victim of Britain's new policy.

Did that *REALLY* happen?

JUNE

24 – Rumours intensify (seriously!) that Celtic's Mark Viduka may become part of a swap deal involving West Ham's Israeli international midfielder Eyal Berkovic.
27 – Soccer Australia announces a 17 team competition for next season's Ericsson Cup. All 16 incumbent teams will be joined by Auckland Kings (pending FIFA approval) and Parramatta Power. A bid from Adelaide United is unsuccessful.
28 - Canberra announces an additional sponsorship: $140,000 over two years from Snowy Hydro Trading Pty Ltd

JULY

1 – The unofficial World Club rankings are released and browsing through the top 300 reveals three Australian clubs. South Melbourne are at 249, while Perth and Sydney United are equal on 279. Oh, in case you couldn't guess, Manchester United are at number one.
3-4 – Swan Hill plays host to the Victorian Country Junior Championships with the finals results:

Under 11s Gippsland 3 , Albury-Wodonga 0	Under 12s Albury-Wodonga 2, Gippsland 1
Under 13s Gippsland 1, North-East 0	Under 14s Gippsland 1, North-East 0
Under 15s Bendigo 2, North–East 1	Under 16s Gippsland 2, Albury Wodonga1

13 – David Ratcliffe is appointed coach of Sydney United and tells AAP *"The task will be fairly difficult as is well documented, however I believe that despite all of the players we lost, we will still formulate a very competitive outfit."*
18 - The Joeys take on Belconnen United in the ACT and have the better of a 0-0 draw.
21 – Carlton head to Green Gully for a friendly and get pumped 6-1 by the Vic league leaders.
23 – Ian Brusasco retires from his role as chairman of the Brisbane Strikers (and a couple of other related positions) but will retain his role as chairman of the Olympic Football Taskforce. In departing he launches a few scuds at Frank Farina and a few more at soccer administrators in general, advising them to follow him out the door and allow for some new faces.
24 – Carlton travel to Buntingh for another friendly and cop another defeat, this time 2-4.
25 – Northern Spirit trounce Highlands United 8-0 in a pre-season warm-up match. Daniel Watkins scores twice.
26 – Stan Lazaridis moves from West Ham to Birmingham City for a reported fee of 1.5 million pounds.
29 – News surfaces of a bid by Canberra Deakin to enter the proposed NSW Summer comp in 2000/01.

AUGUST

2 – Roy Hodgson is announced as the new coach at Grasshoppers in Switzerland.
4 – Jeff Hopkins is announced as the new player/coach at Gippsland Falcons. The Falcons also take the opportunity to announce an ambitious business plan for the Morwell complex. Under the name 'Team Gippsland' the venue would be looking to incorporate Hockey, Netball, Basketball, Indoor Tennis and Aussie Rules into Falcons Park.
7 – Soccer Australia conducts interviews for the national coaching position, and despite the cloak and dagger approach, it seems the hot favourite is still the hot favourite.
9 – John Markovski signs for Carlton for the upcoming season, proving that anything is possible. Can't help but recall the words of Carlton GM Lou Sticca when 'Jonesy' left Optus Oval....

BULLETIN BOARD

Sitter! Is still one of the best reads in Oceania, and with Auckland Kings now in the Ericsson Cup it's time we all did a bit of homework on the blokes we'll be yelling abuse at next season.
And there's lots of quality writing as well, international award winning stuff, in fact, so at least get in touch with Bruce Holloway at:
Sitter! – 11 Thames St, Hamilton, New Zealand or you can sample their wares at www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Park/4430/
Either way, you shouldn't ever miss a Sitter! – Issue 36 out now!
Oh, and the lastest issue includes an utterly unbelievable story of how Kiwi fans were trying to obtain tickets for the Confederation Cup...

For those of you who play FIFA99...
Jamie Rowse would like to let you know he has created a NSL league to replace the USA one. If you want the file go to http://jamiro.mlx.net/soccer/ (version 4 browser required) or email Jamie at jamiro@dove.net.au and he can send it to you.

TUGttHotANSL' Quiz Answers from SU40
1. Mark Rudan (v Carlton, Optus Oval, Oct 25, 1998)
2. Alan McKenzie (v Sydney Olympic, Oct 13, 1996)
3. John Kosmina 1982, Nick Theodorakopoulos 1984, Fabio Incantalupo 1985, Frank Farina 1997

And the winner is Marco Tedde of Rowville (Vic) who not only managed to get the answers correct (and spell them right) but he also managed to get his entry in on time. Well done Mr Tedde and a copy of the NSL guide is probably already at your house.

For those who missed out, check out the details on how to get a guide on page 27.

We Simply Must Quote You On That!

"You shouldn't be able to get 40,000 people at a game, close the gates and lock people out and the next year not be able to capitalise on it. A lot of the players weren't ready in that the following year they didn't perform to their capabilities. Nobody did whether it be the administrators or the players."
Ian Brusasco 'explains' why Brisbane suffered the dreaded premiership hangover
(Quote from AAP)

Look Out For....

Oceania club championship

Sept 18:
Grp A: Sth Melb (Aus) v Konica (American Samoa), AS Venus (Tahiti) v Tafea (Vanuatu)
Grp B: Nadi (Fiji) v Malaita Eagles (Sol Is), Kiwi (Samoa) v NZ rep

Sept 20:
Grp A: AS Venus v South Melbourne, Konica v Tafea,
Grp B: Nadi v Kiwi, NZ v Malaita Eagles

Sept 22:
Grp A: South Melbourne v Tafea, Konica v AS Venus,
Grp B: Nadi v NZ, Kiwi v Malaita Eagles

Sept 25:
Final: Group A winner v Group B winner

Australia v Brazil in November ?

Or will it be the Olyroos v Brazil's Olympic team? Never mind, there's sure to be plenty of colourful Harry Kewell promotions in the lead up, which will obviously be enough for every one to queue up on August 9 for their over-priced tickets. So, mortgage the house and try to make it to one of the following 'events'.

(Excuse our cynicism but I think a few of us have already been through this twice this year).

Sunday November 14 - Stadium Australia, Sydney - 3pm?
Wednesday November 17 - MCG, Melbourne - 8pm

NSW Police Memorial Cup

The 1999 Memorial Cup – featuring a host of NSL clubs - will kick-off on Sunday, August 15, 1999. And it's for a worthy cause as well, so all Sydney residents should try and get along to at least one match.

Sun, Aug 15 – at Marconi - Bonnyrigg v Parramatta Melita, Canberra Cosmos v Blacktown City
Sun, Aug 22 – at Marconi - Marconi v Bonnyrigg/Parramatta, Sydney Olympic v Canberra/Blacktown
Sun, Aug 22 - at Breakers Stadium - Newcastle Breakers v Northern Spirit
Sun, Aug 29 – at Edensor Park - Sydney United v Wollongong Wolves
Sun, Sept 5 – at Marconi Stadium - Semi-Finals
Sunday, September 19, 1999 - Parramatta Stadium - Grand Final plus Third Place Play-off

You can purchase tickets to the whole series for $35 by telephoning 02 9266 4800, Club Marconi (9823 2222) or Parramatta Stadium 9683 5755).

Otherwise, individual game tickets are: Family - $20, Adults - $10, Concession - $5, Under 12 - free